

County of Los Angeles  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES**

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November 15, 2005

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

SUBJECT: **STATUS REPORT ON DPSS RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF CalWORKs (CORE) REPORT ON DPSS SOCIAL SERVICES DESIGNED TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

This is to provide you with a status report on my Department's activities relative to the CORE Report on CalWORKs Specialized Supportive Services, since our last report dated July 25, 2005.

**BACKGROUND**

As you may recall, on November 10, 2003, the Commission for Public Social Services (PSS) submitted its Committee Report and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. On January 15, 2004, we provided your Board with our response to that report and committed to provide quarterly status reports on activities outlined in the action plan to enhance the delivery of CalWORKs specialized supportive services. This is our seventh quarterly report on that plan.

In addition, in our last quarterly report, I advised your Board of additional actions to enhance the Specialized Supportive Services Program through the formation of the California Institute of Mental Health (CIMH) Policy Implications Workgroup. For your reference, attached is the CIMH Action Plan, addressing strategies to further enhance the existing Specialized Supportive Services Program in four areas: 1) Identification and Referral; 2) Engagement; 3) Completion; and 4) Outcomes. The CIMH Policy Implications Workgroup process and list of members are further detailed in this report.

## **STATUS REPORT**

### **1. Study on Sanctions**

An Action Plan to address the issues identified in the sanction study, Study on Sanctions Among CalWORKs Participants in the County of Los Angeles: "Who, When, and Why?", was completed and forwarded to your Board on August 18, 2005. The Action Plan represents a comprehensive approach to increasing welfare-to-work participation and reducing sanctions. The Action Plan reflects activities ranging from modifications to the process through which DPSS staff interact with participants, to modifications of automated systems. I will provide your Board with a progress report focused specifically on the implementation of this Action Plan in February 2006 and quarterly thereafter.

### **2. GAIN Home Visit Outreach**

As previously reported, my Department will be implementing the GAIN Home Visit Outreach Program in all the County-operated GAIN Regions later this fall, and in contracted Regions by early 2006. Implementation of this program, which focuses on home visits to all participants who are at risk of, or have a recommended or imposed first instance sanction, is one of the identified strategies which will contribute to reducing the sanction rate in LA County. Further updates related to countywide implementation will be reported to your Board as part of the Sanction Action Plan.

### **3. Follow-Up Activities by Service Providers**

As you may recall, the Enhanced Services of the Community Assessment Service Centers (CASC) pilot was implemented in several GAIN Regions in November 2004. The pilot provides participants the opportunity to self-disclose and discuss service needs directly with CASC outreach staff. The results of this pilot are being evaluated by a subgroup of the CIMH Workgroup focused on CASC activities.

### **4. Utilization of Professional Staff**

To date, we have hired two (2) staff with Master's Degrees in Social Work (MSW) to strengthen our CalWORKs Specialized Supportive Services Program. We will utilize these staff to evaluate and assess existing policy and procedures, assist in implementing the CIMH Action Plan and as a resource to line staff and partnering agencies. We will fill the remaining five (5) vacancies as additional candidates are added to the Department of Human Resources eligible register.

## **5. Monitoring Effectiveness**

Through our monitoring enhancements, we have increased initial engagement of those referred to specialized supportive services from 52% in August 2004 to 65% as of June 2005. Engagement into Specialized Supportive Services will continue to be a primary focus and is addressed by the CIMH Action Plan. In addition, we will be further assessing completion rates by providers in order to identify best practices.

### **CIMH POLICY IMPLICATIONS WORKGROUP PROCESS AND ACTION PLAN**

The CIMH Policy Implications Workgroup was created to focus on the CIMH report findings and recommendations, as well as planning implications for future program enhancements. The CIMH Policy Implications Workgroup was comprised of representatives from the Commission for Public Social Services' Committee on Review and Evaluation of CalWORKs (CORE), advocates, service providers, partnering departments, and DPSS Managers.

As you may recall, the January 2005 CIMH Study documented the effects of providing mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence services to CalWORKs participants in Los Angeles County and indicated that the "supportive services system in Los Angeles has done a good job of increasing access to services, particularly with certain subpopulations. Despite this, the report highlighted that "there is a continuing need to experiment with new ways of identifying clients, particularly those populations that are difficult to engage." As such, the CIMH Workgroup focused on four key areas of service access and delivery: 1) Identification and Referral; 2) Engagement; 3) Completion; and 4) Outcomes.

Throughout the summer, Workgroup members met and identified strategies to overcome barriers and enhance service access and delivery. Consensus on these strategies was achieved and the attached Action Plan was developed. In addition, two subgroups were formed as follows: CIMH Policy Implications Subgroup #1, focusing on screening activities and CIMH Policy Implications Subgroup #2, focusing on the assessment process. Both subgroups began meeting in September 2006 and meetings are targeted to conclude by February 2006.

### **REPORTS TO YOUR BOARD**

As Departmental commitments resulting from the 2003 CORE Report have been completed, or will be reported to your Board as part of other Departmental efforts (i.e., CIMH Action Plan and Sanction Action Plan), our quarterly status reports to your Board on activities related to the CORE Report will sunset with this final report.

Each Supervisor  
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In lieu of this report, I will provide your Board with an initial progress report on implementation of the CIMH Action Plan in six months and quarterly progress reports thereafter.

Attachment

BY:lc

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Chairman, Commission for Public Social Services  
Director, Department of Mental Health  
Director, Department of Health Services  
Director, Community and Senior Services